

A Serial of Instruction Inviting Grave Research. No. 3.

The advisory productions of your annual meeting as previously referred to may seem unbecoming the work of a great and ecclesiastical body, but it is a part of your official record and you must face it. It has been largely abridged, just enough cited to show you what kind of a gospel, code of moral ethics, or plan of salvation men would make if the power were delegated to them. It also serves to show how much of human nature, and of the unconverted kind at that, church men are inclined to incorporate into their spiritual ethics. It universally tends toward rivalry between the minds that advise God and those that receive advice from God. If God saw fit to forbid adultery, lying, theft, and blasphemy as evils, it was but natural for annual meeting, sitting also as a law-making body, to discover the oversight displayed in the divine law and proceed to amplify its specifications and extend its denunciations to make it cover butchering, Sunday-schools, prayer-meetings, carpet, fur caps, tombstones, "female hats," Prince Albert coats, etc., as *also* things and practices equally condemnatory but unforeseen by the divine Law Giver. I have never been able to give you great credit for mental capacity or intelligent meekness for thus being able to discover and brand evils not previously catalogued.

Even though it was but "advice," yet the elders had a way, also "advice," of disposing of refractory members that was quite satisfactory to their successful church government. Reading your minutes through a series of half a century, ending with 1880, and as no man with discriminatory power, if unprejudiced, can fail to see and tremble at the tendency of an ecclesiastical legislature to paint God with human colors. In other words, and the universal history of Church legislation proves it; a Church legislature would have God act as *they* feel; substitute *their* attributes in the place of *His* attributes.

If the church legislature defines the wearing of a hat by a female, an evil, and expels her for wearing it, if said legislature were God, she would lose her soul for the act. Whether God will do so or not, the church *would* and *does* place her for wearing a hat, where God places her for unrepented heresy.

If the church had its power she would eternally damn every one who violates her minutes, as God would those who disobey him. It is placing the will of the church between the petty local customs and the kingdom of Heaven, with a considerable flourish of authority, not untinged with that remarkably prevalent animal passion called malice.

The identical machine that made your "minutes," your elder power, and your standing committee, made the dogmas of Rome, the priests and the Pope, and that organization, making due allowance for the civilization of the times, has a record every whit as clean as yours. Both, so far as their creeds extend, make salvation a contingency of the will of men as well as the will of God. Violation of God's law—expulsion. Violation of the "minutes," or "edicts,"—expulsion. Expulsion means eternal damnation "for whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." (?) If the church makes a mistake and binds one out of heaven upon a fancied and not a real evil, God is powerless to rectify the mischief, for he has delegated that power to the church and only retained the power to duplicate in heaven, the "binding and loosing that is taking place in the church below.

It predicates salvation principally upon the will and whims of the "leading brethren;" for about sixteen are expelled from the church for violating the minutes of annual meeting to where one is expelled for violating the provisions of the Gospel.

The Pope is God's viceroy on earth, the annual meeting his persistent and unrelenting rival.

The Pope simply makes decisions, and to disobey his edict, invites excommunication, with purgatory as the ultimate penalty. The annual meeting makes decisions, and to disobey its mandate invites expulsion, with damnation as the ultimate penalty. Both these powers predicate their authority upon Matt. 18:18, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." It would be idle to add that any ecclesi-

astical body on earth would gradually migrate into a similar excess under similar circumstances, and with similar views upon that misinterpreted passage of Matthew's Gospel. It affords any aspiring elder an opportunity to discover an evil, such as buying and shipping live stock, and by skillfully manipulating the wires, get it ingrafted into the minutes, when its observance becomes as pregnant with the essence of salvation as the wearing of "female hats" or any other provision of annual meeting, or adultery, or any other interdiction of the divine law.

The whole system is misleading. It crams the provisions of salvation with man-made provisos, and narrows the conception of Deific attributes to the low level of human nature. It elevates the wisdom of men and lowers the wisdom of God by weaving and interweaving the plans and provisions of each into one common system of faith, practice, and obedience in order to salvation.

The bud of corruption sprang from this poisonous root, and its upas leaves have withered and blighted the extended area of its influence. No more withering lie sprang from the serpent's tongue than when he told Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit and become equal with God, than the fatal error that the church is delegated with power to supply the deficiencies of the Gospel through church legislation; and as Eve fell, so will every church fall that trifles with sacred things. Your own history is pregnant with these facts, and I only repeat to show you how others view your course, and as you certainly are beginning to view it yourselves. I would in this way probe your conscience that in the future you may assume a graver, manlier, and more consistent course. Greater organizations than yours have become annihilated from inferior causes, and you cannot longer afford to risk the experiment.

The Schwartzenu brethren would not know you were they to return to earth, loaded down as you are with the identical burden they suffered so much persecution to cast from their shoulders. And could they see you casting out your brethren as heathen for duplicating the covenant *they* made at similar peril, how their hearts would yearn for a return to Him who is grace, mercy, and truth.

(To be continued.)

The Spirit of Adoption.

BY S. B. FURRY.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying 'Abba, Father.'"—Gal. 4:6.

Abba is from the Syrian tongue and signifies Father. Through the Spirit of Christ as Sons of God we cry, Father, Father! Our Lord instructed, when ye pray, say "Our Father." These are to be the earnest aspirations of our hearts by the Spirit of His Son. They are not to be idle words falling from our lips, but utterances in fervent prayer. Under the most powerful and favorable impressions, the words of prayer are few and to the point. "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." "Lord, save, I perish." "God be merciful to me a sinner." "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do." So speaks the heart, and such is the language of earnest feeling. We should be ever anxious to ascertain whether we have the all-important benefit of an inheritance among the sanctified. Whenever the Spirit of Christ takes possession of the heart, its residence will evince an operation there. As leaven it will work; as fire it will burn; as bread it will nourish; as water it will satisfy. If we hunger and thirst after righteousness, God will infuse into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, and then shall we be filled and adopted into his family. As recipients of the Spirit, we change our name, our relation, our disposition and our character. We become altogether new creatures in Christ. Old things have passed away, while all things have become new. As it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." And where shall it rest? Our text says, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. The Lord looketh at the heart, and there is where the Spirit begins, and there is where it must rest. What is practice without principle? but a tree

without roots, and must soon die and decay. What is a stream without a fountain? but a flow of water without a reservoir, and the channel will soon dry up and be erased forever. God is the inexhaustible fountain of good, and He said, "I will put my Spirit within you." The heart of man is the receptacle and the Holy Spirit will cause him to walk in the statutes of the Lord, to keep His judgments and do them. It finds us of a carnal mind, but it immediately gives us a spiritual one to induce us to seek those lofty, everlasting and ever-satisfying things above. When our affections are thus centered upon heaven and heavenly things, it will beget the Spirit of grace and of supplication. Likewise it will help our infirmities, as we know not what to pray for as we ought, but "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." God is the source of it, and it is called the "power of the Highest." It overshadowed the blessed Virgin and transmitted a conception called the "Son of God." Heaven was opened at His baptism, and it again descended in the form of a dove and abode upon him. This is the Spirit of His Son. As the sable folds of night fell upon that gloomy eve, there were none better qualified and authorized to promise the Comforter—the Holy Ghost. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Truly, "we have an unction from the Holy One" through Christ Jesus, our Lord.—the Spirit of adoption as sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. Wherefore abide in the Spirit and comfort one another while on the pilgrimage to a better world.

World ahead! Oh, see the signal
Flashing brightly from the shore!
Far away! Oh, see the city,
Soon we'll reach the blissful shore!
O'er the bounding waves we're rowing,
See! the glorious golden way!
Hark! the thrilling songs of glory,
Floating o'er the silver wave!

Ease is the lovely result of forgotten toil, sunk into the spirit, and making it strong and ready.—WEIGHED AND WANTING.

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.—JEFFERSON.

Young men are apt to think themselves wise enough, as drunken men are apt to think themselves sober enough.—CHESTERFIELD.

On the diffusion of education among the people rests the preservation and perpetuation of our free institutions.—DANIEL WEBSTER.

You may safely commit the child's clothes to the servant, but the rest of the little one you had better take care of yourself.—EXCHANGE.

He who desires more than God wills him to have, he also is a server of mammon; for he trusts in what God has made, and not in God himself.—PAUL FABER.

Destroy Christianity and you destroy society. Take from the world the idea of a hell and there are many men who would soon turn this world into a hell.—REV. DR. TALMAGE.

I have been much self-accused for not referring all to God as the last end; that I do not eat, drink, sleep, journey, speak, and think for God; that practice was so short and narrow, light so long and broad.—SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

There must be a way of handling money that is noble as the handling of the sword in the hands of the patriot. Neither the mean man who loves it, nor the faithless man who despises it, knows how to handle it.—THOMAS WINGEOLD.

He was always ready to criticize, and it was so much the easier for him that he had not the least bent toward self-criticism; for the latter supposes some degree of truth in the inward parts, and that is obstructive to the indulgence of the former tendency.—WEIGHED AND WANTING.

Affliction, indeed, is the only gift for which we are not commanded to pray; but a wise and instructed Christian will know that he ought to pray for a sanctified use of it when sent. We ought to pray that all this cost may not be in vain; we ought to pray that by all these afflictions we may be brought nearer to God, and more out of the world, and never doubt any word of God, or murmur against any of his dispensations, however much we may for the present suffer.—CECIL.